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The Cardinal Ward

*Some Pages
from the
Journal of a
Nursing Sister*

By A. ALLEN BROCKINGTON

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Edna L. Foley.

Presented to the
Hartford Hospital School of Nursing
in memory of
Martha J. Wilkinson, Class of 1890
Hartford's first visiting nurse
by her friend
Edna L. Foley, Class of 1904

IN THE CARDINAL WARD

In the Cardinal Ward

SOME PAGES FROM THE
JOURNAL OF A NURSING SISTER

BY

A. ALLEN BROCKINGTON

Author of "*The Disciple in the Seven Churches*," "*A Little Child shall lead them*," "*John and the Spirit*," etc.

"He was there,
He Himself with His human air."

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SISTER CARDINAL

“No man may come into any knowledge and understanding of God save by the path of holy humility ; for the straight path that goeth up is the path that leadeth down. All the dangers and the grievous falls that have happed in this world have come from none other cause save from the lifting up of the head, to wit the mind, in pride.”—*Brother Giles.*

I

SISTER CARDINAL

THIS will be my third Christmas in the Cardinal Ward, so that I feel I belong to it. My familiar name is Sister Cardinal, so that I feel the ward belongs to me. The wealthier visitors usually hear my story from the matron. They nod sympathetically, and thereafter refer to me as "that poor Sister Cardinal." One has just dropped in on us, accompanied by a very well groomed young man, evidently her son, and they talked together for a moment or two at the far end of the room, near Number 15. Their talk was quite loud enough for Number 15 and several of the others to hear. The young man turned round and looked at me; he had heard his mother's rapid version of my story. Number 15 is an ex-policeman; he is recovering, and sits up and takes notice; he is a pronounced, even blatant, Socialist; he made remarks with his mouth full at tea-time.

"Quite a good family, sister, they said you was ; but come down in the world," he added with a wicked twinkle. "I heard it all ; that sort always talks as if they owned the earth, and had got a mortgage on the 'eavenly mansions."

"You don't deserve to get well," I said.

"And it's so kind of them to come, isn't it, sister ? Us poor people ought to be so grateful for these little attentions. You see, you might be took up by them, bein' of a good family, if only you——"

I told Number 15 to be quiet. The other men were listening, and a boy of fourteen, very, very pale, was gazing at us with wide-opened, staring eyes.

"Stirrin' up class-hatred, sister," laughed the unabashed Number 15. He must have been a most disloyal member of the force, unless he is a new convert. I suspect that he is a new convert, because of his virulence.

Still, as I sat writing reports, I kept thinking about the "good family." Priests, on the male side, rising to an archdeacon in the great-great-grandfather, beyond whom it is perilous to inquire. The archdeacon is supposed to have re-established the credit of my "good family." On the female side, I trace one society lady—I think a maid of honour—

married to the archdeacon, one farmer's daughter, and one daughter of a country rectory. Probably our visitor was thinking of my husband. He was a priest also.

I seem to be identified more and more with my profession. Here I am called "Sister"; casual outsiders call me "Nurse"; it is three years since a little voice called me "Muvver" for the last time.

My husband always called me Jack. I miss that awfully. I have heard him say it in my dreams. And in my dreams the other voice comes back, "Aren't we two nice girls, muv.?" But dreams are mocking things. "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." Yes! that is the comforting experience—the very person, the eyes, the mouth, the look, the familiar and indescribable tingle of the voice. I want to hear my husband say "Jack"; I want to hear his daughter and mine call me "Muv." And dream faces and dream voices are no substitute for their living presences.

The chairman of the governing body, a good, but rather stuffy man, who loves to manage public institutions, always refers to me as very efficient. He

takes a departmental view of life. We are all parts of a machine. I think he would be quite surprised to learn that I was a woman. "God bless my soul, Sister Cardinal a woman! Why, we don't want women in a hospital. We want nurses."

We also want doctors. Our doctors perform all their hospital operations without fee. They attend the sick poor without fee. Almost all of them are good, conscientious men who think they do their best, and give their best. I wonder. A man may give his best, his business or professional best I mean, if he is in love with his business or profession for its own sake, or if he is a whole-hearted lover of men. Otherwise a fee is an inducement, or rather the lack of a fee is a temptation. When the matter is of life and death it is better, if possible, to get rid of every temptation.

My hospital experience is leading me to heretical conclusions. At any rate I know myself well enough to know that if I am efficient it is partly due to the fact that I am paid.

But a nurse ought to have no opinions. Least of all ought she to criticize the establishment and the doctors. I see the necessity for such unwritten laws and restrictions. Our age is not ripe for criticism. It is only possible among people who love one another.

Yet without it we shall not make much progress. Without it our interests will be petty, our successes mean and our self-complacency excessive. In the future we shall have a Chair of Free Criticism at all our modern universities. And one of the conditions of appointment will be that the professor shall never have held the post of chairman of any governing body. Another—that his or her pedigree shall not be discoverable. Another—that he or she shall never have been known as a worshipper of angels.

What nonsense! It is the influence of Number 15. I fear that a men's ward is demoralizing to a person of my temperament. Most of the men who are brought in here have been injured at their work, or the diseases from which they suffer are due to exposure, or under-feeding. Very rarely are they drunkards; and, when they are, there is always something nice about them. Not one among them all but is looking forward to a life of unremitting toil, with the workhouse-fear in their hearts. Number 15 loves the word "exploitation," which he pronounces queerly, more like "exportation" than anything else. "We are all being 'exported'," he says, "for the benefit of a few swanky toffs." It isn't true, of course. It is part of his detestable class-hatred. Yet there is something wrong somewhere.

For instance. At the time of our annual meeting the people who do, or might, subscribe are invited to the Christmas Tree. They are also invited to look round the wards. All the ladies are good and kind, but they are dressed for a function, and they are taken over the children's ward. It really is rather terrible. Some of them examine the patients, until the affrighted little dots are nearly convulsed with screaming. The diseased offspring of the poor are treated as a spectacle. They are shown off to the subscribing public.

I wonder what relation the conduct of this hospital, our social order, and my own outlook bear to the Christian Gospel? The question is always insistent. And it is easy enough to show how far below the standard of the Gospel we fall. The very existence of hospitals is said to be due to the preaching of Christianity. We are all praised in churches at Harvest Festival times. What peace and luxury the poor enjoy through the bountifulness of voluntary subscribers and the spread of Christian ideas! Yet the poor are very unwilling to enter our portals. And they are anxious to depart out again to the suffering and hardship which are their normal lot.

Yoshio Markino, the Japanese artist, who went into the West London Hospital, thought well of us.

“Sisters and nurses must be women just same with all my John Bulless friends. They were as sweet and charming as could be. But why they looked somewhat different from my other friends? I felt as if I were in a holy mountain, far, far away from this world.”

They do look somewhat different from his other John Bulless friends. Nevertheless they are “women just same”—Englishwomen, part of the same social order, looking on patients as numbers and very much as cases, and, in my experience, often making a difference between the rich and the poor. They are not like the Son of Man, without partiality and without preference. Their point of view is not His.

I can hear our chairman condemning all this as sentimental nonsense. And I reflect that the Resurrection took place hundreds of years ago. It is natural for me to think of the Resurrection at Christmas-time, because the hopes that came to me when my child was born are now dead and hid with Christ in God. A friend of my husband’s advertised an Easter sermon, *What does the Resurrection of Christ mean in 19—?* Well, it is the source of faith, and the source of hope, and the source of joy. It is the pledge of Spiritual Presence. The Resurrection

means in 19— precisely what it meant on the first Easter Day. Why, then, I keep asking myself, has it such small effect upon our lives, upon our outlook?

Our town, ancient and honourable borough, abounds in little narrow paved footways between tall walls and buildings. Lanes they are called, but there is no suggestion of greenery about them, and they are very stuffy. One of them runs by some almshouses, and the women beat their mats against the opposite wall, and their rubbish is placed outside for the dustman, and the close odour of their houses seems to pervade the lane. The glory of being old does not always compensate for staleness. At the end of this lane, which opens on the main thoroughfare, are posters. And a poster that remained there for weeks before and after a general election bore this legend—"Assert Yourselves."

I spoke to Number 15 about it. He agreed. I spoke to the matron about it. She agreed. I spoke to the house surgeon about it. He agreed. I spoke to the chaplain about it. He smiled and then grew grave. The thing was too strong for him. It is too strong apparently for all of us. The spirit of the world that sits dead against Christ reiterates "Assert Yourselves."

I am writing at night. The night nurse got a sudden panic. No wonder, with the groaning voices of fellow men in pain! She asked me very timidly if I would mind staying a little while. And so with the light pulled low I am trying to solve the riddle of the world.

We have interpreted the meek-hearted as the weak-hearted, and the poor in spirit as the poor spirited. This night nurse, with her round baby face and large blue eyes and light hair that waves bewitchingly, is one of the humblest persons I have ever met. She is very quick and sympathetic. A dull person would not be affected by the groaning voices. She was so affected by them that she had the courage to confess her fear to me, and to risk her position and work by the confession.

She came to me a few minutes ago and whispered, "If you like to go now, sister, I feel sure that I can manage." Even as she spoke a cry came from Number 13, and I saw a spasm of pain pass over her little face. Number 13 is the very pale boy who looks like Christ in Holman Hunt's picture of the "Finding of the Saviour in the Temple." The night nurse—Christabel her name is—loves Number 13 with that holy, instinctive, self-abnegating love which is the rarest thing in the world.

There is no self-assertion about Christabel. I can imagine her waking at dawn, and seeing a radiant figure standing by her bed and hearing amazing words of a most amazing thing and answering through the dim trouble of her perplexed mind, answering out of a spirit of utter submission that rests somewhere in the very depth of her being, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord."

I have been reading lately a new book about the life and work of John Ruskin. The writer sees in the pitiful torment of Ruskin's later years, the miserable failure of the S. George's Company, the central disappointment of Rose La Touche, the prophet's blindness to the fact that he was exerting a great and growing influence—the writer sees in all this the discipline of God to bring the man to make the great and unconditional self-surrender that is necessary.

"‘Depend upon it,’ said old Carlyle, ‘the brave man has somehow or other to give his life away.’ We are called upon to make an unconditional surrender. Unconditional, I say, because it cannot be on our own terms. We cannot reserve what we like, or choose what we prefer. It is a surrender to a great and awful Will, of whose workings we

know little, but which means to triumph, whatever we may do to hinder or delay its purpose. We must work indeed by the best light that we have. We must do the next thing, and the kind thing, and the courageous thing, as it falls to us to do. But sooner or later we must yield our wills up, and not simply out of tame and fearful submission, but because we at last see that the Will behind all things is greater, purer, more beautiful, more holy than anything we can imagine or express. Some find this easier than others—and some never seem to achieve it—which is the hardest problem of all. But there is no peace without that surrender, though it cannot be made at once; there is in most of us a fibre of self-will, of hardness, of stubbornness which we cannot break, but which God may be trusted to break for us, if we desire it to be broken. And the reason why the life of Ruskin is so marvellous a record, is that we here see the unconditional surrender, of which I speak, made on the most august scale by a man dear to God, starting in life with high gifts and noble advantages.”

I think Christabel must have made her surrender at once. I think S. John must have made his surrender at once. Wisdom is justified of all her children, but these holy people seem to have a

peculiar, *instinctive* feeling for the mind of Christ, for the will of God, so that they cannot hold back. It is a case of love at first sight.

But the others, of whom S. Peter is the type, have to learn their lesson through the chastisement of events. And the discipline of these men makes one agree with a modern writer, "There is something absurd and almost grotesque in man apart from Christianity." One of the first sayings Simon Peter heard was, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Like the majority of Englishmen, he did not believe it. He believed in self-assertion. He was for ever putting himself forward, for ever boasting of his strenuousness and devotion. Yet at the end of his life the first beatitude had bitten into his conscience, bitten in through falls and humiliations and pitiful failures. And as he waited for death in the centre of the world he wrote "Gird yourselves with humility as with an apron of service." His life and Ruskin's make me believe in a resurrection life. There must be a sphere for the exercise of virtue so painfully acquired, for the enjoyment of a character so patiently moulded. The enjoyment of the Christian character is in the companionship of Jesus. God has eternal use for us.

In that poem, wherein the shaping of a life is

compared to the shaping of a cup, the poet exhorts us—

“Look not thou down, but up!
To uses of a cup.”

He pictures a great and splendid banqueting-hall. There is the lamp's flash; there is the trumpet's peal; there is the new wine for the master and his guests. And the master is pressing a cup to his lips. That cup was once being fashioned on the potter's wheel. At the base of it the earlier grooves ran lightly and left the impress of joyous dancing figures; higher up the stress was sterner, and grim scull-things were wrought out. The potter worked amidst the noise of his machine and the apparent confusion of his shop. But he knew all the time that the vessel he was making was intended for these uses. The noise of the machine, the apparent confusion of the shop were necessary, but they were not final. The potter never imagined for a moment that he was putting in all that work that the goblet so shaped should remain in the dust, unprized, battered, useless. He did not work with such an end in view. He looked not down, but up.

So Jesus Christ at another festal board: “I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My

Father's kingdom." He looked not down, but up. Beyond the Agony and bloody Sweat, beyond the Cross and Passion He saw the vision of the risen Body and the consummated life in the intimate Presence of God. The fruit of the vine in the feast He was instituting was the efficacious sign of His most precious Blood. But the Lamb which was slain should be in the midst of the throne, and the signs of death the very symbols of redemption.

All the experiences of our life here are meant to bear fruit in increased power and beauty of character, in fitting us for noble uses, in making us apter instruments in the hands of our Master. But the Master's care is necessary all the time. And all the time, even when life is complicated and confused, even when we are overwhelmed with fear or dazed by doubt, it is necessary for us to remember the end for which we were and are created. If we live in the spirit of a right attitude, if we live with constant reference to God and His use of us, then He will amend all the flaws of our character and perfect what He has planned. Only so will our life be a consistent life, awaiting its completion on the other side of the grave.

"But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, Who moulded men!

And since, not even while the world was worst,
Did I—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colours rife,
Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst :

So, take and use Thy work,
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim !
My times be in Thy hand !
Perfect the cup as planned !
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same ! ”

If we allow Him to have His way with us, we
may become as vessels holding the Wine of God.
We may satisfy God's soul.

THE CHAPLAIN

“Oh, brave are the single-hearted
Who deal with this life, and dare
To live by the inward vision—
In the soul's native air.”

Bliss Carman.

II

THE CHAPLAIN

CHRISTABEL and the chaplain are the two unworldly people among us. In these days an institution that harbours two such bright beings should be counted happy. There is a Spanish proverb, "God gave us eyelids as well as eyes." Christabel's eyelids are closed to the attractiveness of the world, not deliberately closed—as the Spanish proverb implies—but closed by some sweet angel who keeps guard over her. For her the world, the flesh, and the devil hardly exist. When I wrote just now of her as waking to hear wonderful words and submitting herself to their message, I was thinking of the Blessed Virgin in Rossetti's picture. But she is like Gabriel too; where'er she walks her feet are wrapped in fire, and she treads the earth unsoiled by what she treads on.

What a symbol of God is fire! Is the fire of affliction, the fire of temptation, God's, too? It

serves God's purpose well. The chaplain has passed through the fire, not unscathed; the smell of the fire has passed upon him. He is not innocent, like Christabel; he has not the power of Christabel over savage things, over the half-brutalized men whom one occasionally sees here. She is the innocent Samuel, hearing the Voice in the Temple, ere yet the lamp of God goes out. He is more the aged Eli, knowing full well the wickedness even of the chosen people, having himself many sins to confess. But there the comparison ends. For the chaplain is full of hope; he knows that the ark of God is safe; the Philistines can do no final harm. Hophni and Phinehas may err—the men and women the chaplain has helped and prayed for have not always turned out well—yet the Word of God standeth sure. In due time travail of soul will bear fruit; we shall reap if we faint not. There is no failure except in the waning of desire.

If one wants to build a house or run a hospital one needs practical people who can estimate quantities and keep a business hand on supplies, and insist on a fair day's work for a fair day's wages, and talk severely to subordinates, and have a keen scent for slackers, especially among the men. Wisdom is justified of such children. If, on the other

hand, one is in distress of soul, or utter doubtfulness, or sore tempted, one needs, or—to be more candid—I need, the chaplain. It is the chaplain's business, like Brother Laurence's, to keep his mind in the presence of God. He seems to come out of the sanctuary, and to bring the atmosphere of the Redeemer. He is able to tell of strong crying and tears, of love that strives to the end, of prayer that is an agony of desire. Christabel can tell of sunstrewn meadows and the soft amazing sound of streams that haunt the valleys, of birds and flowers, and love that is a peaceful benediction. Wisdom is justified of both these children. Christabel knows that the "blue sky bends over all," and the garden of God blooms all the year round. The chaplain knows that the Gospel may be proclaimed in dark Gethsemane.

The chaplain is white-haired. He looks older than he is, because he bears about with him a very painful body. His hands are swollen by rheumatism; his movements are not without difficulty; he occasionally falters in his speech. There is really something sublime in his enormous power of enduring pain. When we see the foul bird plucking at the entrails of Prometheus the infliction of pain and the power of bearing it are obvious. No one but

himself knows the pain the chaplain suffers, yet in some subtle way the patients realize that the man who is offering them spiritual consolation and exhorting to patience has tested his remedies in his own person.

A middle-aged man was brought in here upon whom a great stone had fallen. He was literally broken, and lay in his bed all tied together, waiting for the end. The chaplain was with him in the dead of night. I heard his voice now and then, and once when I passed the screened bed I heard the chaplain say, "Brother, it all seems worth while, doesn't it?"

And the man answered, "Yes, sir, it is worth while."

Such was the understanding communion held by those two sufferers. They talked to one another as men who knew. Sometimes I think that what a man suffers matters more than what he does. Our pleasure-loving people want not only to avoid suffering, but to flee the thought of it. They are afraid of pain for themselves; they shun the sight of pain. Not in that way was the world redeemed; not in that way shall the redemption of any single soul be wrought out.

There are those who think that man was meant

to be happy ; it all depends upon the meaning you attach to the word. All the beatitudes begin with the word "happy" ; in that sense we were meant to be happy. But I have not the philosophical ability to discuss the matter ; I only know that the chaplain's idea of the end of man's being seems to me to be true. He says (to put it very baldly) that we were not meant to be happy—you must please not think of the first word of the beatitudes in connection with the happiness of which he speaks—we were meant to be men of *desire*. All the experiences of our life are meant to increase our desire for God, our eager longing for His goodness and His character, our intense craving for His presence. "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness." Hunger and thirst are painful ; and our crying desire for spiritual gifts should not be less but greater than a hungry man's longing for bread, or a thirsty man's desire for water. The physical hunger and thirst are but the faint shadow of what the spiritual hunger and thirst were meant to be.

This is the burden of his preaching, this is his central message, this lies at the heart of all his consolation. "If you want God more and more your life is well spent. If your sojourn in this place is teaching you your need of God, and if through

your need of God you are getting to *want* God, then thank God for the disease or the accident that brought you here."

In that old French romance, *Aucassin and Nicolette*, Aucassin is told that he is risking his chance of Paradise, and he cries out, "Give me hell. Paradise is for your old priests and your old cripples." Somehow one's soul goes out to the blasphemous Aucassin. He would have rejoiced in that woman who carried a pitcher of water in one hand and a bottle of oil in the other, and who answered a monk, questioning what she purposed doing with them, that she purposed with the one to put out the fires of hell, and with the other to burn up Paradise, that men might do good for the love of God.

The preaching of rewards and punishments has robbed Christ of almost every Christian attribute. Instead of holy fear, the dull religionists have inculcated a very unwholesome fear indeed; and instead of the chaplain's increase of desire, have offered as God's reward the complacent gratification of seeing others damned.

I remember so vividly the first time I heard the chaplain develop his doctrine of desire. It was soon after my return here as Sister Cardinal, and the

collect for the day was the one that speaks of God as "wont to give more than either we desire or deserve." The chaplain announced a text, "Did I desire a son of my lord? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me'?" As I listened I wondered first what sort of connection the sermon had with the text. He began by speaking of the difficulty of belief in the resurrection of the dead.

"It is not the same as belief in immortality. All the great races have cherished a belief in immortality. The Hebrews did not believe that death was the end. But their belief in an after-life was not a belief in resurrection life as we understand it. They called the place of the departed 'Sheol,' a very dreary place. There was no joy in Sheol; all that makes life worth living was absent from it. 'Wilt Thou show wonders in the dead?' 'Shall the dead rise up again and praise Thee?' 'Shall Thy loving-kindness be known in the dark, and Thy righteousness in the land where all things are forgotten?' They found it impossible to believe that the life of Sheol was comparable to this life. The life of Sheol was shadowy, depressing, and dark. There were, to be sure, certain advantages. The tyrannies and shocks and disquietudes of their earthly course were over. The King of Babylon

for example, that great tyrant, was become a mere wraith, and he had no more any power for mischief. The others rose up at his entrance and said, 'Art thou also become *weak* as we? How art thou fallen, O day star, son of the morning !'

"You see that to them death seemed the end of everything desirable. The after-life was not conceived as a vivid life, as an 'ampler day, divinelier lit,' but rather as homeless night, the uncheered numbness of a soul robbed of all capacity or opportunity of joy.

"There are traces of this faithless attitude in the New Testament. Our Lord's predictions of His rising again established no ground of confidence. The disciples found it almost impossible to credit the message of His Resurrection. And when they saw Him some of them doubted. The hope of those two men walking to Emmaus was in the past. Jesus was dead. Their expectation had been raised only to be disappointed. The promises of the prophets, the lessons of history, could not stand against the fact of death. 'Certain women of our company were early at the sepulchre, and came saying that they had seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive; *but Him they saw not.*' All a shadow of a dream !

“S. Mary Magdalene failed at first to recognize that risen life is a glorified life. She did not know that Christ had passed out into an infinitely greater being than before. She thought that His coming back to life was as the coming back of Lazarus, to a life narrow and earthly.

“We find the same difficulty in believing in spiritual resurrection. ‘The hour cometh and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.’ We find it difficult to believe in the spiritual resurrection of others. There are those who, through persistence in evil, through shirking responsibility, through unrestrained yielding to their lower impulses, seem to have lost the power of righteousness. We ask, ‘Shall Thy righteousness be known in the soul where all things are forgotten?’ Is it possible that men who have stultified their moral sense, who have thrown away their chances, who have gone from one wickedness to another; who, in greed and selfishness, have despised the sorrowful sighing of the poor, have broken their mother’s heart, and trodden under foot the blood of the covenant—is it possible that these men should live, should rise again to tread in the footsteps of our Lord?

“We find it difficult to believe in our own spiritual

resurrection. We have lost power so hopelessly, we have been beaten so often, we have become such an easy prey to the tempter, that we have begun to take our evil as a matter of course. Is it possible that there is a power to snatch us out of the pit of destruction, to draw us from the grave of sin as the old singer drew his wife from the under-world, to guide our feet into the way of peace?

“And, above all, is it possible that this new life should be, perhaps, a better life, a more yearning life, than the life of innocence and guarded security?

“Our Lord said to the sister of Lazarus, ‘I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.’ Through the raising of Lazarus to the life of earth they and we were to recognize a power to raise us from the death of sin. The narratives of raising in the Old and New Testaments bring out two things—a realization of loss coupled with an intense desire for restoration, the compassion and power of God; and God’s compassion and power seem to wait upon the realization of loss and the desire for restoration.

“Think of the prodigal son. There was nothing in the humdrum surroundings of his home that ministered to his vanity or to his passions. He wanted to be his own master, and to spend his

money just how he liked. Of course, he was all wrong from the first; none knew that better than his father. But his father did not run after him and say, as some weak, good-natured fathers would have done, 'My son, come back. Young men must sow their wild oats. We will say nothing about the past. Come back, and it will be all right.' He did not seek out his son; he waited until his son came to himself; he waited until the headstrong lad was on his way back of his own accord, until he realized his loss, and wanted to come home.

"You can appreciate this realization of loss, this desire for restoration in the most beautiful of all Old Testament stories. The Shunammite woman who befriended Elisha, and made him a little room on the roof of her house, was a woman of singular intensity. Her husband was old, and she was childless; and she lived a very lonely life. She was a religious woman: she liked to keep festivals and special days. She was lonely in that; her old husband thought her a bit of a ritualist. When in the great crisis of her life she said that she was going to the prophet, he questioned her, 'Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? It is neither new moon nor sabbath.' He suspected her religious practices. Well, you can imagine

this woman with her aged husband, living her self-repressed, resigned, silent life apart. She had no child; she had no hope of a child. And yet the unbelievable, *unhopeable* thing happened. In gratitude for all her care the man of God promised that her desire should be fulfilled. A boy was born and grew. Then one day he got sunstroke in the harvest-field. His old father did not know what to do with him; he bade the young man carry him to his mother. And the boy lay on his mother's knees till noon, and then died.

"Do you think she realized her loss? Follow her as she went about her journey. She said no word to her husband. To the rider she said, 'Slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee.' She was eager, concentrated. Behind her lay that dead boy, stiff and rigid, upon the prophet's bed. On, on! Out of the way! To Gehazi's inquiring she answered, 'It is well. Stand aside. My business is with your master, and my business cannot wait.'

"Oh, the agony of that prostrate mother! 'Did I desire a son of my lord? Did I not say, Do not deceive me?' Surely it were better that he should never have been born than that he should die like this. Here is realization of loss, here is desire for restoration. All things are forgotten but that still

figure she has left behind her. Nothing matters but that he should live again.

“Do we feel thus about spiritual gifts? Do we realize our own lack of vitality, and covet earnestly that life that is of God. We need to do so. In our collect we address God as ‘wont to give more than either we desire or deserve.’ There is no question of desert. We do not deserve any of God’s gifts, but we must understand what we mean when we say that God is wont to give more than we desire. The gifts of God, in their fullness and vividness, in their breadth and lastingness, are beyond our conception. Yet they cannot be ours unless we *want* them. We must get to know that we are dead, and we must want to live.

“The failures of life are all due to the lack of desire. Men do not want to be good. If you want to be good you will end by being good. If you do not want to be good, then for you all that Agony and bloody Sweat, all that Cross and Passion, all that precious Death and Burial, all that glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and all that coming of the Holy Ghost have been, and are, in vain.

“The compassion and power of God waits upon our realization of our loss and our desire for restoration. Whensoever we awake to a sense of what we

might be, whensoever God's dawning day seems to us desirable and resplendent, when we loathe the shadows among which our life has been passed, then we find Him full of compassion and mercy, with power to lighten our darkness and to keep us from all the perils and dangers of this night."

Such was my first hearing of the chaplain's doctrine. I had a good cry over it. As he described the Shunammite's agony and effort I had a vision of my own little one lying in the immovable stillness of death. There was no Mount Carmel to go to, and no prophet to raise, nor even a prophet's servant to lay his staff upon the face of the child. My husband was ill and helpless. Every one was kind! Some bade me try to forget. I disregarded that blasphemous counsel.

I could not help envying the Shunammite. She had her husband, even though he was old and rather helpless; and her son lived again.

But I was grateful to the chaplain. I could apply his doctrine to my own case, and could feel justified, not in stifling my desire for those two, but in nourishing and cherishing it. I thank God too that I have learned to love them in Christ Jesus. If any would know what "loving in Christ Jesus" means, they must pray for experience. It cannot even be hinted at in words.

“I BELIEVE”

“The only faith that wears well and holds its colour in all weathers is that which is woven of conviction and set with the sharp mordant of experience.”—*Lowell*.

III

“I BELIEVE”

I BEGAN writing this desultory record at the beginning of Advent. It is now the Festival of S. Thomas, and I am in my little room, looking out on a bare wall. For the first time in my career as a nurse I have been peremptorily ordered a week's rest. I go away to-morrow. Already the Cardinal Ward is in the capable charge of a Guy's nurse who happened to be at a loose end after a private case. I suppose I ought to be sleeping, but the last few days have so stirred me to the depths that I feel I must try and piece out an account of them.

Strange that it should be the day of S. Thomas, who was “suffered to be doubtful” of our Lord's Resurrection, because the spiritual centre of these days has been the Resurrection. Religion is to the average man such a thing apart that when it suddenly becomes urgent and absorbing, when a man

is suddenly found resourceless and dependent on prayer alone, our whole world seems changed.

I suppose it will be called very womanish of me, but a cloud has been hanging over me since Brother Walter said he could not accept the miraculous fact of the Resurrection. (I will tell you about Walter in a few moments.) The Resurrection means so much to me. Whenever my heart aches for my husband and my child the Spirit sends me a vision of Christ's radiant form standing in the midst of His disciples and saying, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself."

"Behold My hands and My feet!" This saying might take its place among the "Comfortable Words." "Behold the indubitable marks of the Passion, the places of the nails. It is I Myself; One you saw insulted, scourged, hanging, slain—that One and no other. If in the old days you credited Me with compassion; if you knew Me for your friend; if you saw disease and death vanquished; if you confessed Me Lord and Master—handle Me and see that I am still the same, the very Jesus Christ."

To my doubtful soul, to my perplexed and agitated mind, all confused and troubled, Christ offers the evidences of His victory, of His power, of His willingness to help. He shows the signs of death,

now become the symbols of redemption. He is in presence with me, not a far-off, unrelated God, but Jesus, here and now, vitally interested in all that concerns me, perfectly acquainted with my perplexities and temptations, acutely conscious of my wounds, doubts, falls; here the Son of the Father, "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven"; here the Lord, Who has won the right, through all humiliation and stress of death, to unravel my perplexities, to dispel my doubts, to heal my wounds, to raise me from the death of sin. I can test His nearness—"Handle Me and see."

"It is I Myself." The fierce contention, the Agony and bloody Sweat, the Cross and Passion are over. They were necessary; there was a divine necessity of them. The Son of Man had gone as it had been appointed; but the Christ Who had come through came with the fruits of all His contest and victory, came with the signs of an infinitely greater personality, of a more universal presence. "It is I Myself," the same; but life has been harmonized, completed, brought to that end the Father's will designed.

I look forward to this harmonized, completed life, but there is an expectation that touches me even

more nearly. "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me having." He is the same Jesus. There are the same features, the same ring in the voice; you may put your fingers into the print of the nails. Though He used new and strange powers He was no angel, no unrelated creature bewildered by the crime and misery of earth. He was still the Son of Man, intensely human, sharing man's experiences and man's nature.

When I meet again those I have lost it must be like that—the old familiarity, the touch of the hand, the sound of the voice. Their personality must not be strange to me; but, through the glow of the ampler day, I must be able to recognize their features; amidst the talk of Paradise I must hear the very accents that I loved. The trick of the head, the characteristic gesture, the turn of the body—I want them all.

"O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again!" I want my dead purged of all grossness. Yes, but at all costs I want them mine, the human people I knew. I want to say with Stephen, "Lo, I see the heavens opened, and the *Son of Man* standing . . ."

The Resurrection gives me this faith. Christ

assures me, in His own blessed and lovely Person, that I shall have all the old familiarity. "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself." I shall behold and know and find again my lost, the very same who walked the earth with me and made it pleasant.

I did not mean to write all this; and yet it may help to explain, if any explanation be needed, the gravity to me of Brother Walter's denial.

Brother Walter—the origin of this familiar name is obscure—is one of our youngest, but one of our cleverest doctors. And he is in love with Christabel. They all ought to be in love with Christabel. But mercifully it has been ordered that only Brother Walter sees Christabel as I see her. Of course, he doesn't see her as I see her; his eyes are the eyes of a man. Yet he and I are alike in thinking Christabel unique and uniquely lovable.

Walter is a nominal Christian, an occasional communicant, and, because of Christabel, he has been devotionally inclined this Advent. He has been given to special services. He has been to hear the chaplain, whom he calls "the old man," on Wednesday evenings at the parish church.

Brother Walter is an honest and straightforward man, but one who has kept his religion—what there

is of it—in a watertight, or rather profession-tight, compartment. He has not suffered religion to interfere with business. And he has not had much time to examine its actual content.

He and I fell into talk about the chaplain's second sermon. Walter did not hide it from me that he went for Christabel's sake. Still the old man's sermon had interested him. Then quite suddenly the talk became extremely close and personal, and Walter was saying :

“Well, to be honest, I do not believe in the Resurrection. At least, I do not believe that the disciples saw Jesus after He was placed in the tomb any more than you have seen Him. The thing seems to me to be impossible. It involves a stupendous, and, as I think, unnecessary miracle. Miracles do not commend Christ to me.”

I was very much astonished. I did not know what to say ; I felt like crying.

We were in the middle of the ward, near my table. Right in front of Walter was Number 9, a young man upon whom he had operated. The operation was an extremely difficult and dangerous one. Walter had performed it well, but he had informed me privately the same evening that there was no hope at all ; the lad could not possibly

recover. I went at once to the chaplain. The chaplain knew all about Number 9, and he spent the night—the whole night—before the altar, interceding for Number 9.

I looked up at Walter's clear, clean-shaven face—I have to look up, because Walter is an enormous man—I even thought of those capable hands of his, large but not podgy, with square finger-tips, but I was specially impressed just then with the confident, obstinate set of his mouth and the hardness of his wide, blue eyes. I said, "Do you believe in prayer?"

"Yes," he replied. "Why do you ask?"

"Would you tell me what you believe about it?"

He said plainly that he could not answer offhand as to what he believed about it, but he would let me know. He did let me know the same evening.

"I believe that by prayer you make your mind clearer to yourself, you stiffen your moral fibre, and you are better fitted to make efforts."

"You don't think that any one hears your prayers?"

"In the sense that our prayers influence the ordering of events?"

"Yes. Our Lord said before He raised Lazarus,

'I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always.'

Walter straddled his great legs, and stroked his big, square chin. "Bring me a modern instance, Sister Cardinal."

I thought of Number 9. I had been thinking of Number 9 all the time.

"The chaplain prayed all night for Number 9, and he is recovering, though you gave him up. Do you think the chaplain's prayers made any difference?"

"You wish me to give my honest opinion?"

"Of course."

"Then I do not think the chaplain's prayers, or any one else's prayers, did, or could, make any difference whatever to the state of Number 9's body."

"Or to Number 9's soul?"

"Ah, we can't go into that."

"But the reasonable soul and flesh is one man."

Walter shook his head. "Don't try and confuse the issue. I only know about the body."

Within a week from that day Christabel had to undergo the same operation as Number 9. I never saw any one so horribly unstrung as Walter. He was quite useless anywhere. He came in to see

a patient or two in our ward, but I doubt if he heard a word any one of us said to him. His face became suddenly drawn and thin. He could not sleep; he seems to have roamed his bedroom all night. His anxiety was pitiful in the extreme.

Then he went to the chaplain, and asked him to pray for Christabel.

"I have prayed, I do pray, for her," said the chaplain.

"I want you to pray for her recovery."

"I cannot do that."

"Cannot! You prayed for Number 9."

"Yes, but not for his recovery. I wanted him to recover, yet I could not pray unconditionally for his recovery."

Walter went mad for the moment. "Curse you and your prayers!" he cried out. "I see. You leave a margin for failure. If she recovers you claim that your prayers did it. If she dies—oh, well, you did not pray against that;—'Thy will be done'! Blasphemous humbug!"

"I shall go on praying," said the chaplain gently.

Walter was instantly repentant. In the end those two went together into the chapel.

Christabel is now doing nicely. She is not formally engaged to Walter, but she has been allowed

to see him once. I was there too. She said quite naturally, "Kiss me, Walter. I have been very near to death." He had never kissed her before; he had never spoken words of love to her, or she to him: but it was as Christabel said, the approach of death broke down the barrier.

I hardly think she knew that I was standing by; all her mind was for Walter. I shall never forget the grave, tender sweetness of her yearning childish face. Walter bent over her; I heard him sob out, "O Christabel!", and I left the room.

Truly we never know what we believe in, or what is the meaning of belief, until we are tested.

"We believe that Thou shalt come"—that Thou art coming, intervening in the lives of men, shaping their lives, moulding them; coming at times of crisis, coming to raise up Christabel, and to guide Walter's feet into the way of peace.

Desire makes such a difference. If I am asked to go and meet a mere acquaintance arriving at our station by the one o'clock train, well, I go down; I never have any doubts about the arrival of the train; I take it as a matter of course when the train steams in. But if I am due to meet my lover or my child, what then? I probably arrive at the station long before the train can arrive. The long level

lines of steel become my personal concern. If there is any delay I conjure up a thousand things that might have happened. My mind is eager, expectant : I believe that my love will come, and yet I desire the coming with such fervour and energy that my belief is liable to sudden misgivings, absurd doubts, anxieties of a hundred kinds.

What a world of difference there is between the belief of the casual acquaintance and the belief of the ardent lover ! The belief of the casual acquaintance is not liable to any misgiving or doubt, simply because it is without thought, without intensity, without eagerness, without *desire*. The belief of the lover is compact of desire, of hope, of anticipation of joy. By the side of the lover's belief, the faith of the other is a very pale ghost ; it hasn't any vitality, it is shallow, superficial, never sounding the depths of being, having hardly any personal significance at all.

Many in the Church are without misgiving in their belief, because they are without desire. I myself used to repeat with great ease, “ I believe in the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.” Then when I wanted the resurrection to be true, when I had a stake in the life of the world to come, I began to have the most disquieting doubts. I had never doubted in

the past that I should see the face of Jesus Christ ; now I began to doubt whether I should see the faces of those I had lost. I began to sicken with the awful sense that perhaps, after all, I had believed cunningly-devised fables. And this doubt, coming when it did, revealed to me how weak had been my desire for Jesus Christ. By the strength—the passionate strength—of my desire to see them, I measured the feebleness of my desire to see Him. And I prayed, not that I should be led to believe in the resurrection, but, first and most of all, that I should desire His presence and His coming again so much that I could doubt it. It is only when we feel our need of God that we cry out, “Lord, I believe ; help Thou mine *unbelief*,” because then we know what belief means.

What had happened to Walter ? Well, he had been driven by his need of God so far to belief in prayer as to pray. And he had prayed, I am sure, not in order to make his mind clear to himself, or to brace himself for fresh efforts, but in order that Christabel might not die. He was driven to doubt his own theory of prayer by his desire for a God Who could hear and answer.

It is not only when we realize our need that we need God. Walter did not need God only when

Christabel fell ill, and not need Him when she was well. No ; perhaps he needed God even more then than afterwards, if there is any question of more or less. For our need of Him is perpetual. He made us so that we should need Him ; He offered every sacrifice that He might give us back the power to know our need.

The chaplain knows his need of God ; Walter is only beginning to know it. What Walter now feels his need of is a person of power, who can give him what he wants.

Suppose a boy goes to his father and says, "I pray you give me liberty to do as I like ; give me money to spend in any sort of weakening self-indulgence." Or, "I do not want to learn anything, or to master any craft, or to follow any profession. I pray you dispense me from all this trouble." Or, "I notice that men have to endure hardness (which endurance, you say, makes men of them) ; I notice that men are constantly disappointed of their hopes—and you say that the disappointment serves higher ends than any they can see ; I notice that some men seem to have everything their hearts can desire—and you say that theirs is the most dangerous state of all. I do not believe any of your sayings. I pray you, give me leave to lead my life without hardness and without

disappointment, and with the instant supply of everything I want." I suggest that this boy's requests to his father are very like many of our requests to our heavenly Father. This boy would say of his wise father that he did not answer prayer. We are prone to say the same.

Walter and I both need God. He feels his need of a God Who can heal the sick ; I feel my need of a God Who can raise the dead.

But more than that. Somehow, through my love and longing for my husband and my child, I am beginning to love and long for Jesus Christ. I am looking forward not only to meeting them, but to meeting Him and them. And if I could see them without Him I know I should not be satisfied. So, through his love for Christabel, whether she live or die, Walter will come to love the Lord.

HOPE

“There was no change in her sweet eyes
Since last I saw those sweet eyes shine ;
There was no change in her deep heart
Since last that deep heart knocked at mine.
Her eyes were clear, her eyes were Hope's,
Wherein did ever come and go
The sparkle of the fountain-drops
From her sweet soul below.”

Francis Thompson.

IV

HOPE

I DID not go away after all. I rested, or tried to rest, here. Christabel had a relapse, and I could not bear to go where I should be without news of her even for an hour. So I spent the week between the nurses' sick-house and this room.

Christmas Eve was the worst night. Walter and the chaplain and I sat here and waited. The chaplain tried to beguile us with odds and ends. "I have just been telling a tale to a little girl in 'Barry,' and when I had finished, she sighed and said, 'I should have liked 'un better if it 'ad been something else ; but then, I suppose it wouldn't 'uv lasted out.' I am sure it wouldn't. That's the best of children—they will forgive you many shortcomings, if the tale doesn't come short. And even if she would have liked it better if it had been something else *now*, she won't like it better if it is something else the

next time I tell it. Children are like Walter here—incurably conservative.”

Walter sat on, as if he were listening to some far sound. I doubt if he heard what the chaplain said. The old man raised his voice.

“Do you know why Walter is not a Radical? He would like to be. We all like to be Radicals, or Socialists, or something root-and-branch——”

“I hate politics,” said Walter.

“And always carefully vote Tory. Well, there are conservative spirits on the other side. One woman told me once that her husband was a ‘terr’ble Liberal.’ ‘And so was ’ees vayther afore ’un, and so wur ’ees granfer. They did never change about from one to t’other, as some volk will. They couldnt abide changin’.’ But Walter isn’t like that. Walter is——”

Walter rose and stretched his great form. The pain in his face was very pitiful.

“I think I’ll go across,” he said.

“Sit down,” said the chaplain; “there will be no change yet.”

It was a very still, cold night. Some man passed briskly along the street. We could hear his footsteps keeping time to “Oh, aren’t yer comin’ out, my Juliet?” which he sang in a cheerful and not

unsteady voice. Then, from far away, came the sweet voices of some children, raised in a folk carol they had evidently learned at school :—

“Come, all you worthy gentlemen
That may be standing by,
Christ our Blessed Saviour
Was born on Christmas Day.
The Blessed Virgin Mary
Unto the Lord did pray.

Oh, we wish you the comfort and tidings of joy.”

“Those children ought to be in bed,” said the chaplain, “but I am glad they are not.”

Walter got up again, “I think I’ll go across now.”

“Be patient, Walter,” said the old man ; “you cannot do any good.”

“No ; that’s the worst of it. I feel so helpless.”

“That is God’s way, somehow. We have to feel helpless before we learn that He is helpful. ‘The help that is done upon earth He doeth it Himself.’”

We caught more words of the children’s carol :

“He’s lying in the manger,
While the oxen feed on hay.”

“Lying in the manger,” repeated the chaplain, “there’s helplessness for you. And yet here was the great manifestation of God’s true power. This

helpless Babe was born and lay in the manger because the Mighty One had willed to exert the greatest strength of all, the strength of self-limitation, self-abnegation. He existed in the characteristics of God, and He willed to become man. Whenever you see any one quite helpless, whenever you feel quite helpless yourself, be sure that here is the opportunity—the time has come for God to show Himself. When those devoted people took down the helpless Body of Christ—the stiff limbs that gave to every touch, the bloodless blind face—when they laid Him in the new tomb, how little they knew that this was God's supreme chance! They thought perhaps of their Master's power in the past: that the lame had leapt at His word, that the lepers had been cleansed, that Lazarus had struggled up alive after he had been four days dead. What high hopes they had cherished! 'We trusted that it was He that should have redeemed Israel.' They had hoped for nothing less than that. But what they saw surpassed all hope. They saw the Risen Lord. They saw the indubitable God, clothed upon with His brightness, and they heard Him speaking words of peace. The unlighted gloom of the tomb led on to this surpassing glory. The helplessness of the tired body to the power of an endless life."

As I listened I wondered what conviction the chaplain had in his mind. I thought then that he despaired of Christabel's recovery and was trying to prepare Walter for her departure. Walter thought so too.

"You think she is going to die," he said in a low voice. "You think I shall be comforted with the thought of her better life after death. And yet she will want me, and I shall want her."

"It is a good thing to want people. I want Jesus. I not only need Him, I want Him. You would not be such an anxious man this night without your love for Christabel. But you would be a much poorer man."

There came a tap at the door. The chaplain was wanted in the Cardinal Ward by the "Holman Hunt" boy.

"Sister," said Walter, after he had gone, "you ought to be in bed and asleep. It is selfish of me to keep you up."

I did not answer. Walter sat and gripped his knees. There was a long, long silence, broken only by the bubbling of the water somewhere in the pipes and the faint spirit-like movement of the air outside.

Then the quadruple chime of the parish church

announced the hour, and slowly the mellow bell tolled twelve. The chaplain came in. "He had fallen asleep when I got there," he said, "and so I slipped across the road, and Nurse Christabel is sleeping too. There is every hope now, Walter."

Walter had risen at his entrance. He dropped again into his chair, seemed to slacken like the bowstring when the arrow has fled, his head fell back, and tears rolled unchecked down his face.

Thus was Christmas Day ushered in for us. In the far-off days, as at this time, another Maid was lying peacefully asleep. She fell asleep in hope, for beside her lay her Son, wonderfully conceived, but born in a stable because there was no other place for Him and her. Her hand rested on the edge of the manger, and by the rough platform that served her for a bed stood the patient Joseph. Any child brings "hope and forward-looking thoughts." What hope and thoughts did this Child bring to him, who shared with the Virgin Mother the marvellous secret of His birth? Perhaps his mind flew back to their first meeting. The first meeting of those who grow to love one another always has some strange spiritual stirring akin to awe. Perhaps he saw her at the well, drawing water from the Pool of Hope.

Perhaps something of her pure, submissive spirit

passed into him at the first glance from her deep, dark eyes, even as something of Christabel's spirit seems to have passed lately into Walter. For this man had a quick, responsive nature. A vision of the night, the whisper of an angel in the darkness, had power to influence his waking day. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, either then or afterwards. If his Mary was pre-elect God's Virgin, he was pre-elect also of God for his patient part in the working out of the World's Hope.

We may not know what she owed to him during the months of waiting. We may not know his sudden misgivings, when he needed all his faith to hold the vision true and this conception a transcendent act of God and not a stumbling-block. We mothers alone can bear witness to the steadfast care and tender regard of men, for the days in which we wait must be long and troubled days to them also. And this man's love surpassed the love of other men in its patience and forbearance and unworldliness. He had to think in terms of the Eternal. He had to accept an experience that was at variance with all the modes of being that he knew.

And when the Child was born, it was Joseph who bore the burden and heat of the day. It was Joseph, who arranged and carried through the sudden flight

into Egypt. It was Joseph who resigned all rights of a husband, except the right to protect and serve this maiden and her Son. It was Joseph who trained the growing Boy and taught Him His trade and exercised authority over Him.

No word that he said is recorded in the Holy Gospel. He moves before us, a silent, alert, beneficent figure. Even after the anxious search for the Boy, when He was missed from the Passover company, it is the Mother who speaks, "Why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold! Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." I think of him in Hunt's picture, a tall, stalwart, bearded man, seeming to enfold the Son and His Mother, his large hand resting over hers, which is on the Boy's shoulder, his mild but eager eyes fixed upon Him. One wonders what his thoughts were at the Boy's answer, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"

And so he passes out of the Gospel story. History holds no record of such another. Or, at any rate, he is unique in the Church's estimation of him. If the Virgin Mother raises woman in the eyes of men, certainly Joseph ought to raise man in the eyes of women.

He did not live to see the Son of Man descend into the valley of humiliation; he did not live to see

the Risen Lord. But he was one of those who learned obedience, and for whom experience worked hope.

The chaplain is the hopeful, buoyant spirit among us. For him also experience has worked hope. He thinks in terms of the Eternal. He sees things in a light that is reflected from heaven. If it were not so, experience would have worked despair.

Some men are apparently hopeful, just because they neglect the ugly and sorrowful things. The lot has fallen unto them in a fair ground, they have a goodly heritage, and they refuse to pay any heed to the field that is plashed into mud with the blood of the slain, or to those upon whom the shades of the prison-house have fallen. They shut their ears to the cry of the poor, and the sorrowful sighing of the captive never reaches them. They are like men who visit a city, and seeing broad streets and well-appointed carriages and well-dressed women, with a church tower here and there witnessing to the performance of divine service, complacently offer thanks and praise for these pleasant things. They never penetrate behind the broad streets to the slums and alleys, where unwashed children play on the cinder-heaps, and women struggle for scraps, and men curse God and them.

Hope, in Watts's picture, sits blindfold above the world, playing on one string. There is really only one string to play on, but I do not believe in hope that is blind.

Youth is supposed to be the time of hope. The young men see visions. They see themselves as the leaders of a great crusade. They see themselves reforming the world, and casting out abuses, and making a better and a purer world than their fathers have known. The world is in a muddle. They are going to evolve order out of the muddle. Every child that is born shall have his due chance. Sorrow and sighing shall be banished by beneficent legislation. No more slums, no more haphazard, hand-to-mouth existence, no more squalor, but fair dwellings, and regular employment, and light and air and clean water. Youth is not blind to the facts of the present. Youth's eyes are wide-opened to the evils of the day. Youth wishes to face the facts.

But youth does not face all the facts. Age and death are facts too. The children of the reformed world will grow old and die. They will marry and be given in marriage, and not the fairest dwelling or the most regular employment will guarantee the priceless gift of mutual love. Light and air and clean water will do much, but some wives will still

be childless, whose heart cries out for children of their own, and some will lose their children just when they have learned to love them more than words can tell.

I thank God for the hope of the young. Yet the hope I trust completely is the hope that has been worked by experience. Youth has every right to turn a deaf ear to the old, who have grown cynical, the grey beards to whom experience has worked bitterness and a disbelief in progress. Youth has every right to resent the attitude of the old who have grown apathetic, who are contented with what will "last their time," even if it falls into a ruin on the day they die.

Youth should sit at the feet of the old, for whom experience has worked hope, who have faced all the facts and still go on hoping.

Hope plays on one string. The great encouragement to go on hoping is the Resurrection. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. You cannot be really hopeful until the last enemy has been destroyed. However much we may be disposed to neglect the thought of it, death is a fact. We may not believe in God, but we have to believe in death. And until we have faced out this fact we cannot be hopeful.

Joseph went with the Blessed Virgin Mother to present her Son in the Temple. And the aged Simeon, type of the youthful-hearted, whose soul's youth is the King's Presence, rejoiced over the Child. He was ready to be dismissed, now that he had seen the salvation of God. But at the same time he foretold woe.

The woe came on Calvary. And not all the thought of Gabriel's message, of the Wise Men's visit, of wonderful works done by Him, could ease the Mother's woe. Her Son was hanging on the Cross, suffering and dying. Even the empty tomb and the vision of angels on the third day could not restore her hope. But the sight of the Risen Lord could make His death a glory. The hope that the Resurrection brought was a transfigured hope, a hope beyond all hope. Death had been swallowed up in victory.

When the chaplain was talking to us on Christmas Eve I believe that he was trying to lead Walter to face out the fact of death, and to teach him to believe in the resurrection. Walter is already a nominal believer in a better life beyond the grave, as his words prove. Many people believe vaguely in an after-life. What we have to do is to live our lives with a view to the resurrection. What we have to

do is to judge all life as men and women who are going to lead the risen life, nay, who are training themselves in it and for it now. You see, the Resurrection was a great test. When they saw the Risen Lord some doubted.

The risen life is a life of fellowship with Jesus. In his fear of the death of Christabel, Walter's idea of the risen life was a life of fellowship with her. But his life of fellowship with her could have, can have, no eternal satisfaction, except in so far as it is in Christ. That life is the light of men. Except they share in it they walk in darkness.

Our Lord was always viewing life from the confines of heaven. Resurrection and Ascension were always in His mind. The only recorded saying of His Boyhood declares the necessity of His being in His Father's house. Ascension is His atmosphere. However doubtful may be the manuscript reading which states it, the Son of Man is always in heaven. His words are the words of One Who leans out over the gold bar.

That is why the rulers of this world cannot understand Him. He seems to be turning the world topsy-turvy. The rulers of this world are trying to fit men to live in this world, but our Lord is fitting men to live with Him. The world knows Him not

—it cannot know Him—but His disciples know Him. He has chosen them out of the world. He means that even while they are in the world they should be with Him. He has promised to be with them. It was expedient for them that He should go away, in order that He might be with them. Fellowship with Him, union with Him, identity with Him, is their eternal hope.

Everything is subordinate to that, or rather, every other fellowship finds its real glory, becomes real, in that. If other fellowships have elements of grossness, of selfishness, of self-assertion, of worldliness, of sensuality, then these elements must be refined away—at any cost, because they cannot live in the light as they are—and if they do not live in the light they have no heavenly existence. When our Lord makes this inexorable demand for our love, a demand which to the world's eyes seems jealous and unreasonable, if not impossible, He is stating the heavenly conditions of love, whether it be for father or mother or brother or sister or wife or husband or child or any other person or being. He is not making the demand for Himself, He is making it altogether for our sakes.

Our hope is that suffering is His discipline, and that if we are disciplined we shall rise into the light.

And the light is His light. He is the light. "The Lamb is the lamp thereof."

The Resurrection issuing in the Ascension—the fact that His standpoint is the threshold of heaven—teaches us to understand His measures of value and worth. For character He chooses a child, for grace and beauty a lily of the field. He declares the world's anxiety and ambition to be ignorance of God. He commends the energetic worker, who is working for a Master and not for himself. He condemns the man who takes the safe course. If a man respects only his legal obligations or the standard of society he is altogether lost. Because man is called to be the Lord's brother.

THE FULLNESS OF JOY

“Some future state . . .
Unlimited in capability
For joy, as this is in desire for joy,
—To seek which, the joy-hunger forces us:
That, stung by straitness of our life, made strait
On purpose to make prized the life at large—
Freed by the throbbing impulse we call death,
We burst there as the worm into the fly,
Who, while a worm still, wants his wings.”

Browning,

V

THE FULLNESS OF JOY

I AM at Christabel's home. It is three weeks since the crisis of her illness. A luxurious motor, specially borrowed from a "Dives of a doctor" as Walter called him, has at length put for the town with the reluctant Walter at the steering-wheel. The Guy's nurse is staying on in the Cardinal Ward ; she can stay a fortnight longer. She is a cheerful, capable, and yet curiously casual person. She named a fortnight as her limit ; not that she has anywhere to go at the end of the fortnight, but she longs for liberty, being a woman with the spirit of an irresponsible tramp, who managed by some miracle of self-denial to go through her training at Guy's.

Walter drove us down at a very leisurely pace ; he almost picked his way in order to avoid jolting. Christabel sat beside me, lost in furs and rugs, her face veiled and her feet encompassed with hot-water

bags. The sun was shining, but the air was keen and frosty, and there was some snow in the upland combes. Christabel's home is by the Severn Sea, about twenty miles or so from the hospital. Our way lay alongside the hills which have been familiar to me from my girlhood. A brown squat tower, like the tower Childe Roland sought, crowns the nearest height. Down below it, hidden in the trees, is a big house, where my husband had a friend. I have often walked from the tower along the ridge to Will's Neck, and seen the wonderful vale spread out before me—wonderful in its fertility and orderliness, in the quiet peace of its villages, in its very varied colour, in the hills that shield it and help it to be fruitful. I used to live opposite Will's Neck. It is higher than the tower-hill. The wood abruptly ceases, and leaves the height bare and bold. I was watching a heron soar his way towards Will's Neck when my husband came into my life. He was the new rector of our little parish, and I was at home from hospital, making holiday. As the heron faded away to a speck, a strange voice caught my ear. I turned and saw for the first time the eager, smiling face that still somehow holds me as it held me then.

The road climbs to the foot of Will's Neck. Walter changed his gear for the steep gradient,

making the change gingerly, and glancing apprehensively in Christabel's direction, as if the harsh noise might be too much for her. I saw that she smiled under her veil. She seems to have become very quick in reading Walter during the last few days.

Then we dropped down into a village. Another big house, and another ancient church tower. Up behind the church is a beech grove, to which my husband and I often made a pilgrimage in the days before my babe came. I remember it on a day in March: the pearly grey of the tree-trunks, the vivid green moss at their bases, the laurel bushes here and there, the dense carpet of brown leaves, and the pleasant noise of the hill-stream that was almost hidden from our view. I remember some black sheep wandering in and out among the beeches — such an effective contrast to the greys and browns and greens—and presently the stream was playing an accompaniment to the soft, insistent chiming of the church bells.

All the road seemed haunted with the memories of past joys. Surely in the resurrection these same joys will be renewed and deepened and made permanent. I have looked upon the wood below the "Childe Roland" tower, when the lines and colour

of the trees and the fields climbing to the edge of the wood have filled me with a sense of beauty, so penetrating and yet so baffling that the pain of it has been more than the pleasure. It is said of Robert Browning that his passionate love for flowers led him to bite them to bits in his longing to possess himself of their beauty. The higher joys in this life always seem to have this element of pain. They beckon to something beyond themselves. In this regard, also, the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together even until now, waiting for the adoption, the redemption, the resurrection.

Our Lord, when He spoke of the joy of the resurrection to His disciples, used the comparison of birth-pangs. "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come. But when she is delivered of the child she remembereth no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world." Our Lord chose this joy of motherhood to open out before us the joy of resurrection.

I think again of His own mother, as the strong angel of the presence, Gabriel, God's messenger, greeted her in the dawn of that new day. He came and said, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee." But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner

of salutation this might be. Dim trouble was in her mind, but submission in her heart. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it unto me according to Thy Word."

Thereafter came a great moment of exaltation, when she looked forward to the realization of the promise, when all the meaning of Gabriel's salutation crowded her soul : "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

Still there followed tedious months, and the long and weary journey up to Bethlehem, and the uncomfortable stable, and all the pain and anguish we mothers know.

But when the new-born Babe lay upon her arm, and His sweet breathing caught her ear, and His tiny hands moved like velvet on her breast, then indeed she remembered no more the anguish, for joy that He was born into the world.

If afterwards there are stirrings of inquietude, if afterwards the sword pierces through her soul, yet the first flush of joy to the mother is very pure and very real. She is the instrument of an unplumbed act of God. Another living soul has come into the realm of being, with the promise of life, with, oh, such powers in the germ, and such a destiny, and

such a heavenly Father ! Surely, in a true sense, every child is conceived of the Holy Ghost ; and every mother can take upon her lips the words of the Lord's Mother : " My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

This is our Lord's picture of resurrection joy—the mother's joy in the realization of her child's presence, of the bond that binds her indissolubly to his vivid being. Her joy teaches what joy is. In Thy presence is the fullness of joy. We know joy when we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We shall know the fullness of joy when we shall see Him as He is. Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning when we wake up in His likeness, and greet Him face to face.

The fullness of joy awaits us in such a sphere of intimacy, but there is a joy now, and intimacy is the secret of it. The joy of one's home, of one's own people, is the joy of intimacy. There is a mystery about it, something intensely spiritual. Browning was seeking for intimacy when he bit the flowers to bits.

My husband told me of his boyhood, and I constructed for myself a picture of mysterious joy. He was a boy who walked the streets as other boys do,

and played his boyish games, and performed his boyish tasks. But he also dreamed his boyish dreams. He fed his mind upon a vision splendid. It seemed to him that his real life was passed in some remote and hidden shrine, where the spear fell, and the holy Cup passed, where knowledgeable and sympathetic beings bowed themselves in speechless adoration before the bright face of God Himself. It was many years after that the boy came to know that his vision splendid was the portion of God's people in every place, that in the sanctuary built by men's hands, by the ministry of mortal and sinful men, through the common gifts of Bread and Wine, the face of Christ is turned upon us, and, though from the weakness of the flesh, we cannot see Him truly, yet the vision fades not, but ever Christ beckons us onward and upward, and ever more clearly we hear the sacred anthem, and join with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, uttering words that are the echo of their words, and catching a glimpse of the home they glorify.

We feel our weakness most in our lean capacity for joy; it is this that makes us long for heaven. Henry and Viola, my husband and my babe, both made me long for heaven when they were here; their companionship seemed to promise so much more

than it yielded. I seemed to live for moments of partial realization, and try to vivify the intervals with memories of what had been and what might be again. Especially was this so in the case of Viola. One of our true poets, a great unhappy poet, has written a poem called "The Making of Viola," which might have been inspired by my own babe.

"The Father of Heaven.

Scoop, young Jesus, for her eyes,
Wood-browed pools of Paradise—
Young Jesus, for the eyes,
For the eyes of Viola.

Angels.

Tint, Prince Jesus, a
Duskèd eye for Viola.

The Father of Heaven.

Cast a star therein to drown,
Like a torch in cavern brown,
Sink a burning star to drown—
Whelmed in eyes of Viola.

Angels.

Lave, Prince Jesus, a
Star in eyes of Viola!

The Father of Heaven.

Breathe, Lord Paraclete,
To a bubbled crystal meet—
Breathe, Lord Paraclete—
Crystal soul for Viola.

Angels.

Breathe, Regal Spirit, a
Flashing soul for Viola!"

Her eyes, those "wood-browed pools of Paradise," held some intimate secret that I could never surprise, some message of utter joy which her tongue could never speak. There was a star in the eyes of Viola, laved by Prince Jesus, and only in Him shall the star reveal its glory. One star (speaking even concerning Christ and His Church) differeth from another star in glory; but no star of them all can be seen and known fully as we gaze upward with our feet upon the earth.

Viola's was a crystal soul, a flashing soul, breathed indeed by the Regal Spirit. And in it there were deeps beyond deeps. One caught glimpses of the universal, of the sublime, of the ultimate. The Lord Paraclete shall teach us all things whatsoever Christ hath said unto us. He shall stamp the very image of Christ upon our hearts. It is through such a soul as Viola's that He perplexes and draws us. Our image of Christ is irradiated thereby, and undergoes that baffling and fascinating change which is wrought by the breath of the Eternal. Otherwise the image of Christ tends to be the image of a man, fashioned beneath on the earth instead of descended from heaven.

If the joy of full understanding awaits me still, I can rejoice in their falling asleep. No one who

had not seen it would believe in sleep and waking, that sleep was a necessary preliminary to joyous energy; that if a man be robbed of his sleep he is robbed of his power. So it is with the sleep of death. We have never seen the royal activities of the other world, the manifold multitudinous vigour of the sons of God; and we find it hard to believe that the folding of the hands in the sleep of death is only that they may get a firmer hold upon the robe of Christ; that the closing of the eyes on a fading world is only that they may open on the angel-watered lilies of Paradise; that men rest from their labours here that they may work without weariness there; that the last stern stress means that the barrier is leapt and the summit attained. If sleep is a true image of death, it is, indeed, a word of the Comforter.

And their life in Paradise is preparing me, as nothing else could prepare me, for that renewal of intimacy which shall be permanently joyful, because it is between the souls that know even as they have been known. They know Christ and they know one another. They have learned the secret of mutual self-revelation. It became possible to learn it when the Word became Flesh and dwelt among us, but we may not see Him as He is, nor

our loved ones as they are in Him until our souls have been refreshed in the deep and dreamless sleep of death. And Viola will be to me a blessed Damsel, teaching me the songs she sings there, which my voice

“Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know.”

And Henry will meet me again with his eager, smiling face, knowing so many new things and able to tell them all to me in a language that I can understand, able to lead me by ways that I can follow to the very presence chamber of the Lord Himself. Oh! they will find me an apt pupil. My mind has been much quickened since they passed away; and I shall be very humble with those experienced choristers of God.

I was roused from this reverie of Paradise by the voice of Christabel saying to Walter, who was leaning back over his seat while he allowed the car to “free-wheel” quietly down a long hill:

“The next village, please, Walter. You turn sharp to the right just before you come to the church. Sister Cardinal is asleep.”

“No; only thinking,” I said.

"Nothing unusual in that, I hope," said Walter flippantly.

Walter's Paradise was not far to seek. For him there was no past and no future. He was living intensely in the present, held fast within the bond of a look. I do not believe that he or Christabel reflected upon their happiness, after the manner of the lover in Browning's "The Last Ride Together." But if they could have held that moment of their first ride together, held it and made it immortal, I think they would have counted it the top of joy; they would have asked nothing better. And yet I feel that my Paradise is in some ways a more joyous state.

"'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all"

is a sentiment that takes little account of eternity. Those who have loved never do lose. And the withdrawal from the world of the object of love is even expedient for the lover. They are thrice happy who do not see if only they have believed, because believing is seeing, and a seeing that is unrestricted, not local, but universal, like thought.

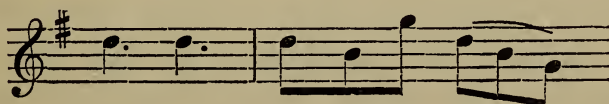
We came to Christabel's house, and were welcomed by Christabel's little old mother—a very small, refined, delicate-featured, white-haired lady

with an evident desire to be the friend of all the world. She beamed up at Walter, whom she had never seen before, and thanked him in a pretty old-world sort of way for all that he had done for her daughter. He was too embarrassed to say that it was as nothing compared to her daughter's service to him, but I know that he felt it.

Christabel said something about me, and the old lady suddenly threw her arms round my neck, and I felt her tears on my face. She had at last given way after the tension of those weeks.

"Dear, dear!" was all she could say, holding me hard—afraid, I really believe, to trust herself to embrace Christabel, lest her agitation should be too much for the invalid.

Well, here I am settled in Christabel's room. The ridiculous motor-horn of Walter's borrowed car played its last tune in our hearing about two hours ago. The tune is,



"Oh! dear! What can the matter be?"

One wonders. Christabel is sleeping soundly, and if I turned the poke bonnet of my lamp in her direction I am sure I should find her smiling. Or,

at any rate, if I woke her suddenly she would smile. She is one of those "best beloveds" to whom He giveth even in sleep, so that she cannot help smiling. She will get quite well, and then the matter will have a strong tendency toward matrimony.

They are only yet at the beginning of intimacy. When I allow my fancy to roam their future, I see Walter in the grip of his grave disbelief once more. I see Christabel schooling herself to a patience beyond the common range of wives. I see her husband in a fit of black depression, and I hear harsh words, scorning Christabel's faith and resenting Christabel's goodness. And then I see her child and his drawing them together with his unconscious baby fingers. Yes, and I see something that I ought not, perhaps, to look upon at all. It is a winter night, such as this one, and Walter's home is in the country. He comes in late from a peculiarly difficult, albeit enlightening, case. Christabel is sitting by the fire. The babe is upstairs, got to sleep with difficulty, having refused the attentions of his nurse, and Christabel is very tired. But as her husband comes in she notices a look upon his face, like the look he gave her when he turned in the car and let it free-wheel quietly down the hill toward her mother's house. He has come from a bedside where he has

been learning. The soul-sickness of his patient has revealed him to himself. And with a passionate movement, not even pausing to take off his wet covert-coat, he flings himself at Christabel's feet, and burying his great head in her lap, sobs out his penitence.

And I see through the pain and humiliation of that moment a joy for both of them that is more divine and uplifting than any other on the earth.

“ABIDE WITH US”

“Lo, now Thy banner over me is love,
All heaven flies open to me at Thy nod :
For Thou hast lit Thy flame in me a clod,
 Made me a nest for dwelling of Thy Dove.
What wilt Thou call me in our home above,
Who now hast called me friend ? How will it be
 When Thou for good wine setteth forth the best ?
Now Thou dost bid me come and sup with Thee,
 Now Thou dost make me lean upon Thy breast :
How will it be with me in time of love ?”

Christina Rossetti.

VI

“ABIDE WITH US”

I AM back at work. Christabel is not here yet ; may not be here at all. Walter is negotiating for a country practice. Every one tells him—or nearly every one—that he is sacrificing his career. People said that to my husband. “Oh, why bury yourself in a hole like that, wasting your gifts on a few country yokels? You ought to have a congregation of the cultured and intelligent.” What a strange saying in the light of the Gospel !

There is nothing in the country to minister to the vanity of an ambitious man, but for doctor and parson there is abundance of opportunity to serve, and a man cannot very well hide from himself, as he often does in the town.

Walter is going into the country because he wants to marry Christabel ; my husband had chosen to work in the country before he met me.

As I look round the Cardinal Ward there is a new face in almost every bed. The old Number 15 is propounding his socialism among his friends and neighbours in that slack, good-natured, and ill-drained village in which he lives "retired." The "Holman Hunt" boy is working in a boot-shop. I saw him the other day, and he told me that the smell of the leather was worse than the smell of the hospital. I told him about Nurse Christabel. His eyes glistened with eager interest. "She were a nice lady, she were. More like a nangel in a picter." I didn't tell him that he always reminded me of some one in a picture.

The chaplain is here, of course ; not looking forward to any change except the final change. When I told him about Walter's plans he said a thing I could understand. "I wonder if they are looking forward to their marriage as much as I am looking forward to the next life." I can hear a healthy man of the world exclaim, "What morbid twaddle !" Yet it is not morbid to crave for the fruition of an eternal companionship. The chaplain is not thinking of glorified restaurants or gilded mansions ; he is thinking of the Bread of Life and Love's Meinie. It is toward evening, and his day is far spent ; no wonder that he should pray, "Abide with me" ;

no wonder that he longs to hear the voice of the Master Whom he serves, and to see His face.

I have been in sore need of the chaplain's steady cheerfulness, for a sudden nausea of the work came upon me soon after my return from Christabel's home. Christabel had spoiled me for other patients, and Christabel's mother had spoiled me for other colleagues, and Christabel's home had spoiled me for this hospital. I began to find the men, and even the boys, ungrateful and unreasonable. I thought my colleagues, nurses and doctors alike, hard and soulless. I hated the routine of an institution after the sweet and kindly atmosphere of a home.

The new Number 15 is a sullen, sour, middle-aged man, who says little, and that little is invariably disagreeable. The new Number 14 is a fatuous man, who quotes proverbs with an air of profound wisdom. The new Number 10 can only be described in a phrase of Keats's—"He is spilt; he ought to be wiped up." I began to feel a personal resentment towards these three men, and also to despise my colleagues because they would persist in treating them as "cases" without any personal resentment whatsoever. They ought not to be treated as cases. Number 14 ought to make you yawn; Number 15 ought to make you hate; Number 10 is not his

mother's true child, "but she bought him of the man who cries, 'Young lambs to sell'." Again I quote Keats, who alone helps me with Number 10. And yet none of the others yawn over Number 14; they simply let him quote his silly proverbs without paying any attention to his platitudes or his personality. They do not hate Number 15, nor feel that he hates them. Nor does Number 10 drive them to Keats for a description of his indescribable spilth. (He has driven me to the dictionary for this word.)

And then the hospital! What a depressingly pitiless place! What a parody of care and help! What a machine for supplying beds and bandages! My heart overflowed with a stupid contempt for it all.

Perhaps even worse was a feeling of petulant resentment against the events of my life that had led up to my present position. When Viola died my husband was ill. I could not let him know that Viola was dead. I had to bear it alone for days. And then a few brief months, and he was dead too.

.

It was a glorious day in July, and we walked together to an early weekday Eucharist down an

avenue of lime-trees alive with myriads of bees. He did not complain, but I noticed that he walked very slowly. Several times he seemed to falter in the service. There was no server, and afterwards I asked him whether I should stay and help him in the vestry. "Oh, no, sweetheart," he said, looking at me with a strange, fleeting smile, his face suddenly grown so like Viola's that my heart leapt. I went home and waited for him. He did not come. I walked slowly down the avenue to meet him; I did not meet him. Then at the gate an awful apprehension flashed into my mind, and I ran with all my might to the church. He was lying before the altar, face downwards.

A new rector was appointed very soon. The home we had made was broken up. My poor dear invalid mother, who had come to live with us, did not long survive the uprooting. Nothing seemed to be wanting of calamity and difficulty. My mother had been supported by an annuity. My husband had had such confidence in his investments that he had not insured his life. His investments proved to be nearly worthless. The proceeds of the sale hardly paid the sum assessed for dilapidations of the rectory-house and glebe. His people came to my assistance, and, indeed, offered me a home.

But I could not rest with them. I came back here, and here, until this time of bitterness, I had found grace and favour.

I know now—or I think I know—the cause of this depression and contempt. It is moral dullness. We are depressed in the present, anxious or hopeless about the future because we cannot read the lesson of the past. God helped us in the past; we traced His signs; He is helping us now. But the signs are not the same. He blazed the trail before us in the past; now there is only a bent twig here, or a trampled leaf there, to indicate the way we ought to walk in. And when we are expecting a blazed trail we are apt to overlook the bent twig and the trampled leaf. Or it may even be that we have learned to look for the bent twig and the trampled leaf, that we have grown so accustomed to scan the doubtful path of pilgrimage that we do not recognize it when it changes into the street of the city.

The lesson of the past is that God is a very present help. He is the Redeemer of Israel; He is redeeming Israel now, and at the very moment that we are bemoaning ourselves and complaining that He has left us desolate He is with us working out through seeming pain and loss a new and unlooked-for glory.

We are so slow of heart to believe all that the

prophets have spoken. They have said that the path of suffering is the path of beauty and of praise ; they have told us of tribulation and travail of soul ; they have preached a gospel of agony ; they have shown us saints under the altar crying, “How long?” ; they have shown us the world giving Christ the Cross when it owed the Throne ; and they have shown us that there was a divine necessity of suffering with a view to a surpassing consummation, “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”

Nor is it until our hearts have burned within us at the revelation of God’s purpose and God’s way that we can have any sense of spiritual presence. This is the surpassing consummation, that He should be known to us in the Breaking of Bread. It is like John of the Temple calling through the fire on the Name of Jesus Christ. And, feature by feature, the Face is made clear to him. So we are led through the fire of suffering up to the knowledge of the Redeemer’s pains, and the Redeemer’s love, until God’s own smile comes out. The Sacrament of His Presence is the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, the Sacrament of Sacrifice. The Risen Lord is known by the print of the nails.

I go back in thought to the time of my honeymoon.

Henry was a man of peculiar visionary power. He had great moments, moments of ecstasy when the light streamed in and his apprehension of a presence was clearer than the day. But he was liable to fits of depression. The heavens became as brass above him ; he would cry out, "There is nothing."

We were on a visit to a ruined abbey not far from our home. He had been strangely silent all the morning, and I was much troubled. I had never seen him like that before. Then, as we walked across the grass to the west of the abbey church his despair found voice. I do not remember what he said ; only I received a dreadful impression of a soul in darkness.

One can trace merely the ground-plan of the church. But the other abbey buildings are fairly complete — sacristy, refectory, dormitory, abbot's parlour, chapter house, kitchen, slype. The old guide told up what he called his rigmarole. When we saw a fish dimly outlined on the wall under the figure of S. Catharine, he told us the Greek for it ; at least, it was very nearly the right word. He chuckled with satisfaction at his knowledge of the dead languages. In the abbot's parlour he explained that parlour meant talking-place — "same word as parliament, *parler*,

to speak: French this time." He showed us an arch drilled with holes to receive Cromwellian gunpowder, and flung out his arm with a fine dramatic gesture, saying, "Barbarians!" He promised to come and hear my husband preach, on condition that he would not keep him too long. "You can say all as you need to say in ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour at the outside." And when my husband, won from his gloom by the man's serene complacency, retorted, "You can't," he replied with unruffled good-humour, "That's one for you, sir."

We went out into the garth. My husband sat down in the abbot's seat on the north wall of the cloister, and mused upon the lives of men long dead, Cistercians who passed their time without speech; laborious men, devout men; gregarious men in the fetters of silence longing to pass a word with their fellows; kindly men ready to help the others and to relieve the poor; jealous men nursing a grudge against a brother, or the abbot, or even against God Himself; men who thought of dead women or dead hopes.

Then we went back into the refectory. The wall behind the high table is adorned with an imperishable fresco of Christ Crucified. For many, many

years, while the abbey buildings were used as farm buildings, this fresco was covered with plaster. Now once more the Face that has inspired the centuries looks down upon men. My husband gazed at it, and then he said, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"

The next day was Sunday. We were staying in a village near the Severn Sea. I remember that we walked hand in hand like children through the gateway of the old chancel screen, and knelt together before the altar. And all the while before my mind's eye passed the two men going to Emmaus. The Stranger joined them, and I heard their talk. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" I saw them at the door of their home—"Abide with us." And the zeal of that prayer consumed me—"Abide with us," "Abide with us," "Abide with us."

I caught sight of my husband's face. It was glorified with the light of a heavenly vision. Jesus had verily made Himself known to him in the Breaking of Bread.

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